

February 22, 2013

Rep. Krayton Kerns
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
Montana House of Representatives
PO Box 200400
Helena, MT 59620-0400

Regarding House Bill 536

Dear Chairman Kerns and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Raistlen Katka and I am 21 years old. I was in Montana State Prison from February 2009 until November 2011. I was put in solitary confinement several times while I was at MSP. I was in solitary in Max one time for 1½ years. This began when I was 17 years old.

I was locked away from education, I was locked away from people, I was locked away from life. Solitary impacted my mental health. Psychological disorders I had been diagnosed with got worse, it affected my behavior – I lashed out. It was a pretty hard thing to go through. Solitary would be detrimental to anyone's state of mind.

I felt hopeless. I felt so hopeless I tried to commit suicide several times. The last time I almost succeeded. They had to do CPR to revive me. After that, the court ordered the prison to transfer me to the State Hospital.

When I got treatment and education, I saw hope for future. Life wasn't dictated by a 6 x 12 cell anymore. There were caring people, loving people who wanted to help me, who showed me a different aspect of life than what I had been in for 2 or 3 years.

Please pass this bill. I don't want anyone else to endure the torture I endured. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Raistlen Katka
Havre, Montana